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Old Testament scholars will welcome this revision more warmly than New Testament scholars did the New Testament. Where fifty men hastened to exhibit their scholarship by a so-called criticism of the revision of the New, there will be but one who will desire to do this in the case of the Old Testament. The fact is, that outside of the Revision Committee, there are not many, the number can be counted on one's fingers, who will dare to criticize the work of that Committee. The leaders in Old Testament study will welcome the revision, and their example will have a weighty influence.

This revision, in which we are all so deeply interested, for which we have waited so long and so patiently, will present the results of the best Semitic scholarship of our age. It is not the work of any one man. It is not the work of any one class of men. It ought at once to be accepted, in the family, in the pulpit, everywhere. However short it may come of what any particular individual may have desired, it will be vastly superior to the old version. If it were better than the old version, in but a dozen cases, this would be reason enough for its adoption.

When this long-expected book appears, let us pray that the members of the Revision Committee will, individually, accept, in general, the work of the Committee, and not attack with hostile spirit those with whom they have so long labored; and also that, by some divine providence, those brethren, who suppose themselves gifted in these matters, but really are not, may be influenced to remain silent, at least until there has been time to consider fairly the character of the revision as a whole.

How to learn to interpret.—In the December STUDENT, something was said concerning Interpretation and Translation. It was asserted, that while by translating a given passage one might learn what had been *said*, there remained the still more difficult task of determining the *thought* intended to be conveyed by the person speaking. As will be seen, the question of translation relates to the field of linguistic study; that of interpretation to a field, much broader, one, indeed, whose limits cannot easily be set. How shall one proceed, that he may learn how to get at the thought of a writer? Or, to put the question in another form, how shall one proceed to teach another *how to interpret?* There are two or three methods in use which may fairly be regarded as inadequate and impracticable:

1) The instructor reads to his pupils long and carefully wrought-out dissertations on Hermeneutics. They are told what to do, what not to do. The principles of interpretation are arranged in logical order. Hair-splitting distinctions are made between this and that. A multitude of details are presented for consideration. Rules, covering every imaginable case, are prescribed. And yet, notwithstanding all this information, the student is at a loss to know how to proceed to the actual work of interpretation. Indeed he does not proceed. Nor can he, so bewildered is he by what has been told him.

2) The instructor dictates page after page of so-called exegesis. He seeks by this, first to teach his students the only correct interpretation of the chapter or book thus considered; secondly, to teach them, by the example, which he thus furnishes them, how to interpret for themselves other portions of Scripture. The exegetical notes thus obtained by the student are carefully laid aside. There is

little use for them in the future, since similar material, probably as good, and certainly in a much more convenient shape, is at his command. The second aim of the instructor in this work is a fruitless one, because the notes given present the results of his work and not the method adopted by him to secure those results; and also, because the student never gains a familiarity with them which will make it possible for him to receive the help desired.

3) A third unsatisfactory method may be mentioned. By this method, the instructor announces certain general principles, and a certain routine of work. A passage is assigned to each for investigation. The student is expected to gather, from every possible source, whatever material he may find, to arrange it in such manner as may seem to him most satisfactory, and to present it for criticism in the class. But this method may be criticized (1) on the ground that much time is necessarily lost by the student in his ignorance as to what material he needs and as to how and where he may get it, time which would not be lost, if at the beginning he were shown how to do the work; (2) on the ground that the work of the student, when so large and so indefinite a task is assigned him, is hurriedly performed, and is, consequently, injurious rather than helpful; and (3) on the ground that no instructor has sufficient time in which to criticize such work in a satisfactory manner before the class. While a superior student may profit by this method, the average student will gain little or nothing that is of value.

4) We venture, now, to propose a fourth method, which seems to combine all that is good in the other methods without including their defects. It will be well to distinguish the steps in this method: (1) Let a verse or a passage be selected by the instructor, the working out of which will bring to light as many as possible of the principles of interpretation. Let this verse or passage be worked out, in all its details, by the instructor, in the presence of the students. Let him not merely announce his work, but let him show how he obtains his material, and how he uses it. Let the work be done closely, each student following it minutely, and noting the various steps. (2) Let a second verse or passage be selected, and treated in the same manner as the first, except that here the student, guided by the instructor, may share in the work. With a third, and a fourth, and, if there is time, a fifth verse or selection, let the same plan be followed. (3) Now let both instructor and student proceed to formulate the results of this work. Let each principle, which has come up, be compared with other principles, and thoroughly comprehended. Let these principles, now that they have been discovered,—and the instructor should, so far as possible, allow them to be discovered by the student,—be arranged in logical order. If the material used has not been sufficient to furnish all the more important principles, let other selections be made and studied. (4) It remains only to apply as widely as possible the principles thus learned. The student has been shown how to proceed; he has been taught the principles. Let him now proceed upon his own responsibility, in accordance with the principles which he has learned. Selected passages may be assigned to all the class, and after some practice to individual members. The results of the class-work should be criticized in the class; the results of the individual work may be criticized privately.

By this method, we are persuaded, men will learn how to interpret. What is it, at first, that is more desirable, a knowledge of the meaning of a given verse, or a knowledge of what to do in order to get at that meaning? No one will deny

that the latter is by far the more important. That method, therefore, which fails to accomplish this end is a failure. That our ministers have not been properly trained in this particular, will be evident, at once, to any one who will seek to find a connection between the sermons which from time to time he hears preached, and the texts on which these sermons are supposed to be based. That ministers and Bible-teachers need this kind of training, that they are unable to do the work, divinely assigned them, in a satisfactory manner without this ability, is clear to all.

Many men must learn to interpret without the aid of an instructor. Let them follow the method here proposed. Having selected a good example of interpretation, examine closely the different parts of the same. Analyze it and satisfy yourself as to each step in the process. Take another example, and another, until you have gathered *for yourself* material from which to formulate *for yourself* the most important principles. Verify the results of your work by references to an authority on the subject. Then apply the principles, working out results carefully, not hurriedly. These results may be submitted to others for criticism.

Do not suppose that by reading through, or even by memorizing a treatise on hermeneutics, you will know how to interpret, any more than by memorizing a grammar, you will know how to translate, or by memorizing a work on homiletics, you will know how to preach. There is a rational order of procedure, in the acquisition of every kind of knowledge. Why is it not well to follow this order?